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COCHIN

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS.

(OFFICIAL REPORT OF THE SECOND LEGISLATIVE SESSION OF THE FOURTH COCHIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.)

Vol. IV — 1112.

COCHIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Tuesday,

24th November, 1936.
9th Vrischigam, 1112.

The Council met in the Council Hall, Ernakulam, at Eleven of the Clock with the Hon'ble the President (Sir Shanmukham Chetty, K. C. I. E.) in the Chair.

Messrs. Popatlal Goverdhan Lalan and M. Sivarama Menon were absent.

Questions and Answers.

Agricultural Moratorium and State Reduction of Agricultural debts.

26. Mr. K. M. Ibrahim *(Cranganur)*.—Will the Government state:—

(a) the reasons why they have not extended the period of the Agricultural Moratorium and effected a State Reduction of Agricultural debts;

(b) what they intend to do on the two counts, mentioned in (a) namely the Agricultural Moratorium and Debt Reduction?

Mr. T. S. Narayana Ayyar *(Secretary to Government)*.—

(a) In view of the several relief measures adopted by Government they did not consider it expedient to extend the period of the Moratorium, which was but a purely temporary

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measure; nor did the conditions in the State warrant any 'State Reduction' of Agricultural debts.

(b) Government do not intend to take any further step in this direction.

Mr. K. M. Ibrahim *(Cranganur).*—Sir, did not the original question sent by the Member read like this?

"Will the Government state:—

(a) the reasons why they have not extended the period of the Agricultural Moratorium and effected a State Reduction of agricultural debts on the strength of the Diwan's Proceedings dated 2nd March 1934, L-6-3309/1109, to wit, "On account of the prevailing depression, the agriculturists in the State find it difficult to pay interest on debt incurred by them before the depression began. Owing to the precipitous fall of agricultural prices, debts incurred by agriculturists five or more years ago on the security of their lands have now been increased by anything up to 300 per cent in term of agricultural commodities", and of the resolution, passed by the Cochin Legislative Council on 20th February 1934, namely, "This Council recommends to the Government to formulate a scheme to scale down agricultural debts in proportion to the fall in prices";

(b) The reasons of their hesitation to continue the Agricultural Moratorium which has already been deemed by them as a reasonable public palliative;

(c) What they intend to do on the two counts, mentioned in (a) namely the Agricultural Moratorium and Debt Reduction"?

Mr. T. S. Narayana Ayyar *(Secretary to Government).*—Yes. It was partly disallowed by the President.

Mr. K. M. Ibrahim *(Cranganur).*—Though it has been partly dis-allowed, the issue is the same.

Mr. President.—Certainly not. When the Hon'ble President disallows a question, it cannot be brought up again by the question being read in the House.

Mr. K. M. Ibrahim *(Cranganur).*—The Hon'ble the Secretary speaks about several relief measures adopted by the Government on these two counts. But is there any relief measure promulgated by the Government which even touches the fringe of the two counts that have been mentioned in the original question?

Mr. President.—The question asks for an expression of opinion.

Mr. K. M. Ibrahim *(Cranganur).*—With reference to subdivision (b), may I know the reasons for the unwillingness of the Government to take steps in that direction?

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Mr. T. S. Narayana Ayyar *(Secretary to Government).*—Government are convinced that the measures already taken are adequate enough to tackle the present situation. I would draw the Hon'ble Members' attention to the answer to question No. 36 appearing below.

Mr. K. M. Ibrahim *(Cranganur).*—Whether the ameliorative measures which the Government say they have taken go besides the issue framed in this question?

Mr. T. S. Narayana Ayyar *(Secretary to Government).*—I have already answered the question.

Mr. K. T. Mathew (*Kunnamkulam*).—On a point of information, we have been referred to question No. 36. May I know whether the Hon'ble Members can ask supplementary questions on question No. 36 now?

Mr. President.—If it is convenient, there is no harm in taking them together.

Mr. E. Ikkanda Warriar *(Urakam).*—Have these relief measures brought any relief to the agriculturists?

Mr. T. S. Narayana Ayyar.—*(Secretary to Government)*—In the opinion of Government, they have.

Mr. E. Ikkanda Warriar *(Urakam).*—Have they completely alleviated the distress of the agriculturists?

Mr. T. S. Narayana Ayyar *(Secretary to Government).*—It is a matter of opinion.

Mr. K. M. Ibrahim *(Cranganur).*—To what extent have they alleviated? May I know the nature of the relief that is given?

Mr. T. S. Narayana Ayyar *(Secretary to Government).*—That is given in the answer to question No. 36.

Mr. E. Ikkanda Warriar *(Urakam).*—"Government do not intend to take any further steps in this direction". Is it because they are unable to take any further steps or that the distress of the people have been alleviated?

Mr. T. S. Narayana Ayyar *(Secretary to Government).*—Government have done what is possible in the existing circumstances.

Mr. E. Ikkanda Warriar *(Urakam).*—Is it due to their inability to find out the relief measures?

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Mr. T. S. Narayana Ayyar *(Secretary to Government).*—The position of Government was more than once explained both by the ex-Diwan and the present Diwan in the Budget Sessions of 1109 and 1110. I would invite the Hon'ble Members' attention to page 379 of the report of the Budget Session of 1109, and pages 374 to 379 of the Budget discussions of 1110.

Mr. K. M. Ibrahim *(Cranganur)* —Are we to take it that the unwillingness is due to the change of policy, sacrificing the interests of the vast majority—of the powerless majority—for the sake of the powerful minority?

Mr. T. S. Narayana Ayyar *(Secretary to Government).*—I invite attention to those pages, which explain the position of Government.

Mr. K. T. Mathew *(Kunnamkulam).*—Can the Government direct us to refer to an answer which has not been answered in reply to a question which is answered?

Mr. President.—The Secretary to Government only said that the full information is given there. Anyhow the Hon'ble Member can ask supplementary questions on question No. 36 now.

Mr. K. M. Ibrahim *(Cranganur).*—Why was not the generous remission not continued this year?

Mr. K. Achyuta Menon *(Diwan Peishkar).*—The reasons for not giving the remission in 1112 have been set out at length in IV, Cochin Legislative Council Proceedings, Vol. III, Part III, Page 334.

Mr. K. M. Ibrahim *(Cranganur).*—Was not a cut motion passed by this Council against that attitude of the Government?

Mr. Shabdai S. Koder *(Jews-Special).*—Has not the price of the agricultural produce gone up considerably now?

Mr. K. Achyuta Menon *(Diwan Peishkar).*—Yes.

Mr. E. Ikkanda Warriar *(Urakam).*—What amount has been advanced under these two heads, the Special Loan Scheme and the Land Mortgage Bank, to the agriculturists?

Mr. T. S. Narayana Ayyar *(Secretary to Government).*—Under the Special Loan Scheme 2,29,755 rupees and under the Land Mortgage Bank, Rs. 1,29,355.

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Mr. E. Ikkanda Warriar (*Urakam*).—Has the Government any idea of the indebtedness of the agriculturists in the State and what proportion this payment would bear to that?

Mr. K. Achyuta Menon (*Diwan Peishkar*).—The extent of indebtedness is very much. In trying to eradicate all those amounts it will be impossible to advance amounts. The extent of indebtedness may roughly be put at 70 lakhs, for I have received applications for loans to that extent.

Mr. E. Ikkanda Warriar (*Urakam*).—Does that loan of 70 lakhs include all the debts in the State?

Mr. K. Achyuta Menon (*Diwan Peishkar*).—I cannot say.

Mr. E. Ikkanda Warriar (*Urakam*).—Has the Government made any enquiry so as to ascertain the extent of indebtedness of the agriculturists of the State?

Mr. K. Achyuta Menon (*Diwan Peishkar*).—Except through the agency of the Economic Survey, I have not made any enquiry.

Mr. E. Ikkanda Warriar (*Urakam*).—Did you invite all the debtors to apply for loans or only those who have sufficient security to offer?

Mr. K. Achyuta Menon (*Diwan Peishkar*).—Applications were invited only from persons who could give security.

Mr. E. Ikkanda Warriar (*Urakam*).—As a result of the economic enquiry has the Government come to any conclusion as to the extent of indebtedness of the agriculturists of the State?

Mr. K. Achyuta Menon (*Diwan Peishkar*).—I do not think any definite conclusion has been reached about the figure.

Mr. A. Eachara Menon (*Chittur Rural*).—What was the generous remission given to the agriculturists ?

Mr. K. Achyuta Menon (*Diwan Peishkar*).—12½ per cent for two years and 18¾ per cent for one year.

Mr. A. Eachara Menon (*Chittur Rural*).—It is said as one reason for not continuing the remission that the cost of agricultural products have improved.

Mr. K. Achyuta Menon (*Diwan Peishkar*).—The depression has improved to that extent as to withdraw the remission,

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Mr. P. Kumaran Ezhuthassan (*Vadakkancherri*).—In answer to a question put by the Member for Jews the Hon'ble Member for Revenue has replied that the price of agricultural produce has improved. May I know to what extent has the price increased?

Mr. K. Achyuta Menon (*Diwan Peishkar*).—There has been a distinct advance in the price of cocoanut, copra, cocoa-nut-oil and paddy. The price of paddy is from 6 as. to 7 as. now. There is an increase of Rs. 2 in the price of cocoanuts.

Economic Depression—relief measures.

27. Mr. K. M. Ibrahim (*Cranganur*).—Reading the Diwan's Proceedings, dated 2nd March 1934, L. 6-3309/1109, to the extent, 'On account of the prevailing depression, the agriculturists in the State find it difficult to pay interest on debt incurred by them before the depression began. Owing to the precipitous fall of agricultural prices, debts incurred by agriculturists five or more years ago on the security of their lands have now been increased by anything up to 300 per cent in term of agricultural commodities.....' and the resolution passed by this Hon'ble House on 20th February 1934, namely, 'This Council recommends to the Government to formulate a scheme to scale down agricultural debts in proportion to the fall in prices', will the Government state whether they intend to take immediate advantage of this non-official sanction for an official proposition?

Mr. T. S. Narayana Ayyar (*Secretary to Government*).—Government have been doing everything possible to mitigate the effects of the economic depression.

Mr. K. M. Ibrahim (*Cranganur*).— May I know what more the Government intend to do in this matter?

Mr. T. S. Narayana Ayyar (*Secretary to Government*).—I have already answered that question.

28. Mr. K. M. Kunhi Moideen (*Kattur*).—Will the Government be pleased to state:—

(a) whether they are aware that

(1) a Communique was issued by the Government of Cochin on 2nd March 1934 wherein was stated 'On account of prevailing depression the Agriculturists in the State find it difficult to pay interest on debts incurred by agriculturists five

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